



U.S. Department of Justice

Ronald C. Machen Jr.
*United States Attorney for the
District of Columbia*

*Judiciary Center
555 Fourth Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20530*

PRESS RELEASE

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For Information Contact:

Public Affairs

(202) 514-6933

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District Teenager Pleads Guilty to Third Degree Sexual Abuse for Attack on Stranger

--neighbors help stop attack and detain suspect--

WASHINGTON - A seventeen-year old District of Columbia resident, Joshua Wafer, pleaded guilty on Friday, April 30, 2010, in the Superior Court of the District of Columbia to one count of third degree sexual abuse for his unprovoked attack on a total stranger on January 20, 2010, U.S. Attorney Ronald C. Machen Jr. announced today. Wafer is scheduled to be sentenced before the Honorable Herbert B. Dixon, Jr. on June 25, 2010. He is facing a sentence of one-to-three years of incarceration under the D.C. Superior Court voluntary sentencing guidelines. Wafer has been incarcerated since his arrest for this incident.

According to the government's evidence, the victim - a young graduate student who had just moved to the District a week before the attack - was coming home from school around 7:00 p.m. on January 20, 2010. As she walked on the path next to her building in Northeast Washington, D.C., the defendant snuck up behind her and grabbed her around the neck. As the complainant struggled to get away from the defendant, the two of them fell to the ground on the wooden walkway. She was able to get away from the defendant and run a few feet further up the walkway before the defendant grabbed her foot, again knocking her to the ground on the walkway. Again, the complainant struggled, successfully, to get away from the defendant. She then ran up to the front door of her apartment building, got it unlocked and tried to run through the doorway and into her building when the defendant jumped on her back, tackling her to the floor of the foyer of her apartment building.

Inside the foyer, the defendant got on top of the victim, covered her mouth with one of his hands and fondled her with the other, telling her what he wanted to do to her. The victim continued struggling, unsuccessfully this time, to get away.

Because of the commotion caused by the defendant's attack, the occupants of three different apartments in that building eventually came out into the foyer. They all saw the defendant on the complainant's back as the complainant laid face down in the foyer, and saw that

he was covering her mouth, trying to prevent her from calling for help.

One of the neighbors who witnessed the attack told her teenaged son to get the defendant. The son gave chase and was joined in his efforts by an adult man. They caught the defendant while he was still in the 300 block of Taylor Street, NE, and brought him back to the foyer of the apartment building where the attack had taken place. They, and the other neighbors, detained the defendant until the police arrived and arrested the defendant.

In announcing the guilty plea, U.S. Attorney Machen praised the intervention of the victim's heroic neighbors, who intervened and prevented an even more serious crime from occurring. U.S. Attorney Machen also praised the work of MPD Detective Lenard Jenkins and Fourth District Officer Dane Riley. He also praised the work of paralegal Joyce Arthur, legal assistant Tanisha "Nikki" Nelson and victim advocate Melissa Milam. Finally, he commended Assistant U.S. Attorney Peter V. Taylor, who investigated and prosecuted the case.

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